



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

2 45 0376 3820



LANE MEDICAL LIBRARY STANFORD

ASTÔDÂN,

AND

Recorded Instances of Children having been
Nourished by Wolves and Birds of Prey.

TWO PAPERS

READ BY

JIVANJI JAMSEDJI MODI, B.A.,

BEFORE THE

ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY
SOCIETIES OF BOMBAY.

RA
621
M59
1889

1900
HIST

Bombay:

PRINTED AT THE

EDUCATION SOCIETY'S PRESS BYCULLA

1889.

71

LANE

MEDICAL



LIBRARY

**HISTORY OF MEDICINE
AND NATURAL SCIENCES**

AMERICAN BOOK CO. NEW YORK

To

by H. Bühler

with the best regards of the
author

Chate 3rd March 1870

The paper on **ASTODAN** : or "A Persian Coffin said to be 3,000 years old, sent to the Museum of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, by Mr. Malcolm, of Bushire," was read before the Ordinary General Meeting of the Society held on Wednesday, the 29th August 1888, when Brigade-Surgeon **W. DYMCK, B.A., M.R.C.S.**, presided.

The paper on "**THE RECORDED INSTANCE OF CHILDREN HAVING BEEN NOURISHED BY WOLVES AND BIRDS OF PREY**," was read before the Natural History Society of Bombay at its Ordinary General Meeting held on Tuesday, the 7th May 1889, when **Dr. MACONCHIE** presided.

These papers are printed from the journals of these Societies under the kind patronage of the **SIR JAMSHEDJEE JEEJEEBHOY TRANSLATION FUND**.

ASTÔDÂN,

OR

A Persian Coffin said to be 3,000 years old, sent to the Museum of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, by Mr. Malcolm, of Bushire.

THE subject of my paper this evening is the Persian coffin kindly sent to our Museum by Mr. Joseph Malcolm, of Bushire, through Mr. C. J. Michael, of Bombay. I beg to submit to the Society a few observations showing that there was an old religious custom among the ancient Persians, the ancestors of the present Parsees, to make small structures of this kind for the preservation of the bones of the dead.

The coffin is made of a kind of stone resembling our Porebunder stone. It is made out of a single piece of stone, and is covered by a lid of the same material. The lid also is made of a single slab. The coffin is 28 inches in length, 14 inches in breadth, and 10 inches in depth. The rim is about an inch in thickness. It has four holes, each about a quarter of an inch in diameter, on its four sides, just at the upper edge. The lid also has four corresponding holes. Mr. Malcolm thinks that these holes were intended for metallic fasteners, which have, of course, rusted away, and which fastened the lid with the coffin. The stone of the coffin bears evident marks of the mason's tools to make it smooth.

The coffin contains human bones in different states of decomposition. At my request the skull was kindly submitted by our Secretary to medical examination, but on account of its

A

75694

insufficient contour nothing could be made out of it. The bones are only of one individual. From the size of the bones, a learned medical member of our Society thinks that they belong to a grown-up man of about sixty.

Mr. Malcolm, while forwarding this coffin, writes from Bushire:—

“The box contains a small earthen coffin (with lid), which again contains human bones. The coffin was dug up from our grounds here, and is said to be about 3,000 years old, and to belong to the old Fire-worshippers, before they had a Tower-of-Silence. Some of the Persian phrenologists have pronounced the remains to belong to the Mongolians, but others assert that they are the bones of old Persians before the conquest of Persia.”

I wrote to Mr. Malcolm on the 27th of June soliciting information on the following points:—

- (1) The average size of these coffins.
- (2) Circumstances showing whether the coffins were actually buried, or whether they were merely buried by the fall of houses in which they were placed.
- (3) How many feet under ground they are generally found?
- (4) What are the materials of which they are generally found to be made?
- (5) Was the lid nailed with the coffin? and
- (6) What are the holes in the sides for?

In reply to these inquiries, Mr. Malcolm in a letter dated Shiraz, 5th August 1888, which came to hand just in time last week, writes as follows:—

“The said coffin was accidentally found in a vault about 5 or 6 feet below the surface of the ground, at a place called Reshire, among others deposited there, and covered with the *débris* of parts of the vault that had fallen in from the effects of rain. The said vault is about 7 miles from the town of Bushire, and the grounds surrounding it are covered with

mounds, which are manifestly the ruins of what must once have been buildings. The particular vault itself was under a mound, and the removal of which for agricultural purposes led to the discovery of the said coffin, and this mound like all the others must have been the wreck of an edifice built upon that depository of coffins. There is no doubt, considering the limited space in the coffin, that it was after the exposure of the dead to carrion birds that its bare bones were disjointed and entombed in the manner in which they were found, for otherwise the space in the coffin would not have been sufficient for the purpose. About three miles from the site of the vault, and in a southerly direction, in the part of the country called Bakhtiar, there is a small plain within two or three feet of the surface of which there were found, some forty-five years ago, and may still be found, barrel-shaped coffins of baked earth, containing also human relics stowed away in the same fashion as these in the stone coffins, and the two sorts of repositories may be said to be of equal size and capacity, though far different in shape. The barrel-like coffins, which are termed jars, are of two equal parts, being divided in the middle breadthwise, and evidently joined together by metallic fasteners, which have, of course, rusted away, but the holes on the rims of each half, evidently intended as holds for the fasteners, bear evidence to this explanation. The same explanation may apply to similar holes on the sides of the stone coffin and its lid. One peculiarity of the jar coffins consists in there being in each of them a handful of the seeds of a plant in Persian called "Hioola," but I cannot now recall its botanical name. The plant generally grows in the grave-yards in Persia, and the seeds on account of their almost imperishable quality may have some connection with that ancient custom of their being buried with the dead. About forty years ago, not far from the site where the jar coffins were found, and on an elevated ground, was to be seen a large heap of bleached

human bones. These at one time in remote antiquity must have formed the contents of a repository of bones attached to a Tower of Silence. Very likely these bones still exist on the spot, though in a more decayed condition. I say "likely," because my father, who used to visit the place forty-five years ago, has not been there since. I may observe that the stones of which the Tower and the repository were built must have been carried away, as in the case of those of other buildings, by the natives for the construction of their houses in the villages which now exist in these parts. The jar coffins must have been buried deeper than they now appear to be. The shallowness may be accounted for by centuries of rain washing away the earth above them. I may mention that the plain in several parts of which these coffins are found must have been the site of a large city, as one would infer from the large quantities of stones lying strewn about, the larger pieces having been taken away for building purposes. A fort with a broad ditch on three sides of it,—the rest being protected by its contiguity to the sea, and which goes by the name of Káala-e-Bahamane, that is Bahaman's fort, must have been the citadel of that city. This is the fort which was occupied by a warlike tribe called Tangustoonees during the war of 1857, who offered the only resistance to the British troops on their march to the town of Bushire, and which was mentioned in the war despatches as Reshire Fort,—the name being derived from that of a village near it but of comparatively a modern date."

As far as I know, this is the first time that Bombay has received a *stone* coffin of this kind from Persia. But the barrel-shaped coffins spoken about by Mr. Malcolm in his letter were formerly received in Bombay. Our learned Vice-President, Mr. K. R. Cama, says in his *Zarthoshti Abhyas* (*i.e.* Zoroastrian Studies) that he had heard it said that Sir John Malcolm, the well-known author of the *History of Persia*, had brought with him from Persia a jar of this kind, which had some inscriptions on it, and had showed it to the late learned

Dustoors Moola Feroze and Edaljee Sanjana. On inquiring from the successors of these learned Dustoors, I find that no notes have been left of the decipherment, if any, of these inscriptions. It appears that such coffins are found in different parts of Persia. Sir Henry Layard says, "The Dervish told me that some years before, when the rains had washed away the soil near the tomb, some coffins had been uncovered containing human bones, which on being exposed to the air had crumbled to dust."¹

The stone coffins seem to be very rare, because Sir John Malcolm speaks only of the 'jar' coffins in his *History of Persia* (Vol. I., Appendix p. 498, note). He says "Many vases full of human bones have been recently discovered. Several were dug out of a mound near Abusheher when I was residing there, and I was told that vases of the same kind were found in different parts of Persia. Those which I saw were of a size that could not have contained the body of a full grown person, but as the skeletons were complete, the flesh had evidently either been cut or eaten off."

But before the time of Sir John Malcolm two jar-shaped coffins were for the first time sent to Bombay in the year 1813 by Mr. Bruce from Bushire. It is exactly 75 years ago, on the 6th of July 1813, that a paper was read, on these jars by Mr. William Erskine before the then existing Literary Society of Bombay, the parent of the present Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. This paper is published in the first volume of the "*Transactions of the Literary Society, Bombay*," (1819,) under the heading "Observations on Two Sepulchral Urns found in Bushire in Persia." Mr. Bruce, while forwarding these urns to Mr. William Erskine said: "As I know you are fond of the antients and their works, I presume you will have no objection to examine some of their remains; I therefore have sent you two boxes, each containing an urn with the bones of a human

¹ Sir H. Layard's *Travels in Susiana, &c.* Vol. II., p. 298.

body. This mode of burial must be very antient and prior to Zoroaster, as I fancy his followers have not altered their mode to this day. The Mahomedans, we know, never have. I have not touched them, but send them just in the way I found them in the ground. The spot from which they were taken contained five urns, one a small one, for an infant I suppose, being one family, as this is the way in which they are generally found. They were interred in a straight line, lying east and west, the small end to the east. I have examined a great number of these urns, but never met with any that contained coins; I hope you may be more fortunate, as it would lead to a knowledge of the time when this custom prevailed." In a subsequent letter, in answer to some inquiries made by Mr. Erskine, Mr. Bruce added: "In regard to the urns, all that I have yet heard of have been found in a flat country, excepting a few that were met with in a mound about twelve miles from this. They are generally in numbers of six, eight, ten, twelve, and so forth, lying in a direct line east and west, and are always near ruins where habitations have been formerly; indeed, I met with a number once in a space or compound which was surrounded by buildings half standing." It is important to note here the description of the jar coffins as given by Mr. Erskine.

"The urns are both made of a well-baked coarse-grained sandy clay, having a tendency to break off in scales, the whole very much resembling freestone. They are oblong, rudely cylindrical in the middle, one end contracting and terminating in a circular opening like the mouth of a jar with a rim thicker than the rest of the vessel, while the other end also contracts, but runs out terminating in a thinnish prolonged point. The urns are about three feet in length, and the widest two feet nine inches at its greatest girth, and in thickness varying from half an inch to three-tenths of an inch. The circular opening is in both about three inches three-tenths in diameter, and was filled up with a bit of baked clay. When the boxes were opened,

one of the urns had divided into two parts, the other into three, as represented in the drawing.¹ The surface of both the vessels, particularly towards the opening, is slightly marked with circular rings, similar to those observable on vessels turned on the potter's wheel. On opening the urns, they were found to be completely filled with a very fine reddish heavy sand, not lying loose but collected into coherent masses, which contained the bones; a slight odoriferous perfume, somewhat resembling spirit of aniseed, was emitted on breaking these masses. The bones lay in them, without any kind of order,—a skull, a leg-bone, and the joints of a finger, occupying the same lump; many of them were broken, and must have been in the same state when put into the urn. There was no appearance of flesh on any of them nor in the urn; they were very white and rather friable, and have not crumbled down, though now opened and exposed to the air upwards of a twelvemonth. They have no appearance of having ever been exposed to fire. All the bones were huddled together without distinction, each bone being however separated from the other by the cohering sand. In the jaw-bones the teeth were to appearance in good preservation, but friable like the bones: the inside of both the urns was incrustated with a thin black bituminous substance which burns when exposed to flame."

Now this coffin before us is not a coffin in the sense in which we generally understand it, *i.e.*, a case in which a dead human body is inclosed for burial. One may suppose from the smallness of the size that it is the coffin of an infant, but it is not so, because medical opinion says that the bones seem to be those of an adult of sixty.

Now the most important question is, to what nation or community this and similar other coffins belong? Agreeing with Mr. William Erskine we may safely say, "that they could not belong to Mahomedans, who do not seem ever to have deviated

¹ *Vide Transactions of the Literary Society, Bombay, Vol. I., p. 191, for the drawing.*

from their original customs, as to use urns or any other device for preserving the body after life has forsaken it. The form of the urns (much more resembling the mummies of Egypt than the fine forms of Greek and Roman taste,) as well as the uncalcined state of the bones, take away all probability that they could belong to traders or settlers of Greece or Rome: nor does the mode of sepulture in question appear to have been adopted by the Armenians, or any other sect of Christians."

We are told by Prof. Geiger, on the authority of Justin, that the ancient Parthians exposed their dead to birds of prey, and then buried the bones after the flesh was eaten off. But we do not know whether they made receptacles for the bones like that which we have before us, or simply buried the bones.

It is very probable that, as generally believed in Persia, these coffins belonged to the original occupants of the land, the ancient Zoroastrian Persians, the ancestors of the present Parsees. But have we any grounds to say that the ancient Persians had among them any custom of preserving the bones of the dead? Yes, we have. This coffin is what the old Parsee books call an "astodân" or ossuary, *i.e.*, a receptacle for bones. It is the relic of a very old custom which is well-nigh obsolete among the Parsees of India as among their few co-religionists in Persia. A remnant of this custom is observed in a quite different way in the construction of their present Towers of Silence. It is a custom which has its origin in one of the commandments of the Vendidad, a book of the Avesta Scriptures of the Parsees.

Now what was this custom? The custom, as described in the Vendidad, was this, that the body of a dead person was exposed on the top of a hill to the full rays of the sun and to birds of prey. The birds ate away the flesh, but the bones were preserved uninjured by fastening the dead body. After a certain time, probably a year, the bones, which had by this time become perfectly dry and free from any impurity that

“If the Mazdayasnans can afford it (they may place the bones) in an astodân of stone, or in that of mortar, or in that of an inferior material. If the Mazdayasnans cannot afford to do so, they may place them on their beddings and expose them on the earth to the rays of the sun.”

[illegible]

“When the body is properly eaten away, the bones should be carried to an astodan (*i.e.*, a bone receptacle), which should be so elevated from the ground and be so (made) with a roof (or a cover) that the rain shall in no way fall over the dead sub-

stance, and that water shall not remain over it from above, and that not a drop shall fall over it from above, and that a dog or a fox shall not have an access to it, and holes be made into it for the admission of light. It is further enjoined on this point that the astodân shall be prepared of a single stone and its cover (or lid) be made of a single well-prepared perforated stone, and that it be set with stone and mortar all round."

When we refer to old Greek historians we find allusions to this custom of the double process of exposing the body and preserving the bones, though the custom is not perfectly understood by the writers. First of all, we find Herodotus, the father of history, saying that the dead bodies of the ancient Persians were, after their flesh being eaten off, covered with wax, and then buried in the ground. Strabo alludes to this custom when he says that "their mode of burial is to smear the bodies over with wax and then to inter them. The Magi are not buried, but the birds are allowed to devour them." Burial in the strictest sense of the word was prohibited among the ancient Persians as among the present Parsees. So it appears that these authors refer to the custom of placing the astodâns or bone receptacles in vaults as found by Mr. Malcolm.

There is one thing more in the statements of Herodotus and Strabo which is not corroborated by any Parsee book. It is that the skeleton, after its flesh being eaten away, was covered with wax. The main idea seems to be that of preserving the bones, and therefore it is possible that some Persians covered the bones with wax, which could keep off the action of air or water and preserve them longer. But this custom is not alluded to in any old Parsee book, though it is specially mentioned that care should be taken that no water should fall over the bones. Instead of wax we find from the letter of Mr. Malcolm, that some jar-shaped receptacles contained the seeds of a plant called "Hioola." It is possible that these seeds have, like wax, the property of preserving the bones from destruction. From Mr. William Erskine's description of the vases sent to him

in 1813, we learn that the bones therein were covered with a kind of reddish sand. From all this it appears that the wax or the seeds or the sand were intended to protect the bones from the action of air or rain, the main idea being that of the preservation of bones.

Thus we see that there was a custom in old Persia of preserving the bones in *astodâns* which were placed under vaults in detached buildings. The ancient Persian ruins near Persepolis known as the tomb of Cyrus, are the ruins of the edifice that contained the *astodân* of king Cyrus. It appears from the construction of this edifice, as described by Chardin, Niebuhr, Sir Robert Kerr Porter and other eminent travellers, and from Mr. Bruce's letter to Mr. William Erskine, that rich families had their own family vaults in which the *astodâns* of the deceased members of the family were placed together. The tombs in the *Kaale-i-Rustom* (Rustom's castle) on the banks of the Karun, referred to by Sir Henry Layard¹ and those at Shiraz referred to by Sir John Macdonald Kinner² and Lieutenant Selby³ are the family *astodâns* of this kind.

For those who could not afford to have separate family vaults there were common vaults near the city. Everybody who could afford had a separate *astodân* of his own of stone, mortar, clay or coarse cloth, but the poorest of the people had a common receptacle in which their bones were placed together. Mr. K. R. Cama says in his '*Zarthoshti Abhyas*' that he had heard it said by a Zoroastrian Persian that the latter had seen in Persia large pits on tops of mountains covered with large stone slabs that contained human bones. This is corroborated by what Mr. Malcolm says, in his second letter, of the existence of a large heap of human bones on an elevated place. It is also corroborated by Sir H. Layard, who says: "About 7 miles from

¹ Journal of the Royal Geograph. Society, vol. 16, pp. 51, 52, and Travels in Susiana, &c. Vol. II., pp. 25, 237.

² Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire, p. 90.

³ Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. 14, p. 226.

ASTODÂN

the junction of the Karun with the river of Dizful, on the right bank of the former are the remains of a town of no great extent, belonging to the Sassanian epoch. The mounds are strewn with pottery and glass, and I discovered a well filled with human bones.”¹

This is then an evidence of a common astodân for the poor. The following statement of Herodotus seems to me to be a similar evidence for the common astodâns. While speaking of the battle-field of Platae, he says that many years after the battle, the Plateans "made discovery of the following: the flesh having all fallen away from the bodies of the dead and the bones having been gathered together into one place, the Plateans found a skull without a seam, &c."

Now why were the bones preserved in the 'Astodâns'? Why was it thought necessary to collect and preserve the bones? They were preserved for the time of the resurrection. The doctrine of the resurrection is an old Persian belief. We find the following passage in the *Zāmād Yasht* (p. 89).

[illegible]

“Yat upanglachat savshyantam verethrâ Janem uta anyâus-
chit hakhayô, yat kerenavât frashem ahûm azareshintem
amareshintem afrithyantem apuyantem yavaêjim yavaêsûm
vasô khshathrem yat irista paitî usehishtân jasat juyô
amerekhtish dathaitî frashem vasna anghush.”

“That splendour will attach itself to the successful Saosh-yant and to his companions when he shall make the world fresh,

¹ Sir H. Layard's paper on Khozistan, *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, vol. 16, p. 63.

when the Saoshyant will make the dead rise again from their bones.

Apart from the question whether the astodâns were buried or merely placed on the ground in subterranean vaults, it seems quite clear that they had some connection with the ground. A mystical passage in the Bundelesh (XXX. 6) accounts for this connection. It is there said that at the time of the resurrection, when the dead will be made to rise again, their bones will be claimed from the earth, where they have been reduced to the state of dust, their blood from water, their hair from trees, and their life from fire. The passage is as follows :—

110 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100

• ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ •

“Pavan zak hangâm min minô-i-jamik ast va min maya khûn, min ûrvar mâi min âtash khaya chigûnshân pavan bundeheshnæ padiraft khâhad ” (p. 72 Justi.) i.e. “At that time (of resurrection) will be demanded bones from the spirit of the earth, blood from water, hair from the plants, and life from fire, as they were accepted by them in the creation.”

Now there remains one question to be considered; and that is about the antiquity of this coffin. Mr. Malcolm says it is said to be about 3,000 years old and to belong to the old fire worshippers before they had a "Tower of Silence." Mr. Bruce, while sending his urns seventy-five years ago said: "This form of burial must be very ancient and prior to Zoroaster, as I fancy his followers have not altered their mode to this day." Mr. William Erskine says that as the custom of constructing the modern Towers of Silence, in which the central well serves as a common receptacle for the bones, comes down from the time of Zoroaster, these coffins must belong to times anterior to or just after Zoroaster. These

European writers have come to this conclusion, because they have not before them the writings of the old books to guide them. The passage in the Vendidad referring to the preservation of bones is not properly understood even by many European translators. Dr. Geiger, of Germany, seems to have properly understood it. Well, then, when we take into consideration that the Vendidad was written, if not in the time of Zoroaster at least after him, but not at all before him, we come to the conclusion that this custom of preserving the bones also prevailed after Zoroaster. The Pehelvi book *Daedistan-i-Dini* which, as we saw, speaks of this custom of preserving the bones in an *astodân*, is a much later book. When it makes mention of this custom, it seems that the custom was prevalent at the later time also. From the consideration of these facts, we see that the custom was not altogether obsolete until a long time after Zoroaster. Then we cannot positively say that these coffins must be 3,000 years old, or that they must belong to an age anterior to Zoroaster. It is possible that they may be 3,000 years old or 2,000 years old, but we cannot positively determine their antiquity, but at least this much is certain, that they belong to a period anterior to the Mahomedan Conquest.

RECORDED INSTANCES OF CHILDREN HAVING BEEN NOURISHED BY WOLVES AND BIRDS OF PREY.

*A Paper Read at the Bombay Natural History
Society's Meeting on 7th May 1889.*

THE wolf is, as its very name shows, a ferocious and blood-thirsty animal. The word is the same as the Sanscrit Vṛka (Z. Veherka Pe and P gúrg and Lat. Vulpes), and comes from an old Aryan root, vraçc, (व्राञ्ज), to tear off. Though by nature a ferocious animal as implied by the root of the word, it is susceptible of entertaining towards mankind maternal or human feelings. This paper is intended to describe a case of this tender feeling as recorded in India, and to state a few similar cases, as narrated in old classical literature, of wolves and birds of prey.

I was travelling in Northern India in the early part of 1887, and when I was at Agra at the end of March, I was attracted to a place known as the Secundra, which contained a tomb of Mariam, a Christian wife of the great Akbar, who had, in accordance with his views, of tolerating different religions, taken to his harem wives of different nationalities. I went there to see if there was anything specially Christian in the tomb of that queen, as there was something specially Hindoo in the royal chambers of his Hindoo wife at Fatehpur Sikri. Though I saw nothing there specially Christian, I was delighted with my visit to that place, as I saw there a man who was generally known as the wolf-boy. A boy

of the Secundra Church Mission Orphanage, which is located there, drew my attention to this man, whose history reminded me of what I had read in classical literature of ferocious and blood-thirsty animals turning at times tender and kind-hearted. I will describe the history of this boy in the words of the Rev. Mr. Lewis, who published a short history of the Secundra Orphanage in 1885. He says of this boy:—"On February 4th, 1867, he was sent to the Superintendent of the Orphanage by the Magistrate of Bulandshahr, with the statement that he had been taken out of a wolf's hole or den. Some natives, it turned out on further enquiry, had been travelling by some unfrequented part of the jungle in the Bulandshahr district and had been surprised to see a small boy, of five or six years of age, walking about on his hands and feet. On drawing near to see this strange sight, they were amazed to see the boy disappear quickly within the interior of a large hole, which, on close inspection, turned out to be the dwelling-place of some wild beast. Finding that all efforts to unearth the boy were fruitless, and fearing to venture in after him, they set off to report the unusual occurrence to the Magistrate Sahab of Bulandshahr. This gentleman on hearing the story despatched messengers to the spot, with instructions to light a fire at the mouth of the cave, so as to force out the occupant of the hole by means of the smoke. This was done, and on the blinding and choking fumes making their way into the furthest corner of the hole, a fine snarling she-wolf sprang forth with a bound, and after scattering the bystanders in considerable terror, rushed away for safety and dear life. A moment later the boy too came forth, when he fell an easy prey to those intent on securing him. On conveying him to the Magistrate, the boy was found to be speechless, imbecile, and as near an approach to an animal as a human creature can possibly be. Vegetable food was offered to him; but this he refused. And it was only when meat was placed before him that he would eat. Finding it impossible to ever make the boy rational and useful, the Magistrate forwarded him to Secundra, with the request that he might be allowed an asylum there."

This is the short history of the boy as given in the book referred

to. Though wanting in the most ordinary intelligence, he seemed to be sensible of many things. He is reported, in the book in question, to be sociable and unselfish, and "always willing to share his numerous gifts with any one caring to have them." Owing to the lateness of age at which he was brought to the Orphanage he could not be taught to speak, though the attempts of the authorities of the Orphanage in other respects have been successful. At the time when I saw him he was asked by a boy of the Orphanage, by means of signs, to walk like a wolf. He did so on his hand and feet. Then he made me some signs which were interpreted to me as a desire to have some money for smoking cheroots, of which I was told he was very fond. At the time when he was first brought to the Orphanage he walked like an animal on his hands and feet, but he was soon taught to walk erect. At first he did not allow clothes to be put on him. He tore and threw them away; however, he was soon brought round to the use of these. His desire for raw meat only as food was gradually subdued for that of vegetables and ordinary cooked food. He is very ugly in appearance. It is supposed that the boy must have come across the path of a she-wolf, and that she, having lost her young ones, treated him with motherly kindness and care in place of her little ones; or that she must have stolen the boy from the side of his mother, as is very frequently the case in the poor cottages of many villages in the North-Western Provinces, and then instead of devouring him, must have entertained some attachment for him.

The Rev. Mr. Lewis says that Secundra Orphanage has been the home of two other wolf boys and one wolf girl. My attention was kindly drawn by a friend to the proceedings of 1875 of the Bengal Asiatic Society, before whom a paper was read on a similar subject by the geologist, Mr. V. Ball. This paper contains a short account of one of the two boys referred to, supplied to Mr. Ball by the Rev. Mr. Erhardt, the then Superintendent of the Secundra Orphanage. The account says of one of the boys that "he was brought to us on March 5th, 1872. He was found by Hindus who had gone hunting wolves in the neighbourhood of Mynpuri, had been burnt out of

the den, and was brought here with the scars and wounds still on him. In his habits he was a perfect wild animal in every point of view. He drank like a dog, and liked a bone and raw meat better than any thing else. He would never remain with the other boys, but hide away in any dark corner. Clothes he never would wear, but tore them up into fine shreds. He was only a few months among us, as he got fever and gave up eating. We kept him for a time by artificial means, but eventually he died."

Mr. Erhardt says further on: "Neither of the above are new cases however. At the Lucknow mad-house there was an elderly fellow only four years ago, and may be there now, who had been dug out of a wolves' den by a European doctor, when I forget, but it must be a good number of years ago."

Ancient classical literature holds before us several cases of such miraculous escapes of children at the hands of ferocious animals and birds, like the wolf and the eagle. The case of Romulus and Remus is well known to many of us. Amulius, a king of Alba Longa, who had deprived his elder brother, Numitor, of his rightful claim to the throne, being fearful lest the heirs of Numitor might rise against him, caused his son to be murdered and his daughter Silvia to be made a Vestal virgin. Silvia being violated by Mars gave birth to two sons, Romulus and Remus, who together with their mother were ordered to be drowned in a stream of the Tiber, whence they were carried by a she-wolf, who had come there to satiate her thirst, and who feeling an attachment for them, suckled and nourished them. Their discovery at the wolf-den by Faustulus, the king's shepherd, led to their ultimate return to their grandfather Numitor and to the foundation of Rome.

Tradition has attributed to Zoroaster a miraculous protection at the hand of she-wolves. When a child he was stolen from his house by some evil-minded persons, who predicted a great blow to their evil cause at the hand of the child when it came to age. They took the child to a den of wolves at a time when the ferocious beasts were absent from their home, killed their young ones, and placed the child there, with a view that the wolves on their return, finding their

young ones thus killed, might wreak their vengeance upon the child. The wolves on their return seeing what had taken place at first grew furious, but soon after took the deserted child under their protection, until it was discovered and taken home by the mother, who was wandering in search of the child.

Old classical literature gives us other instances where young children were nourished and brought up, not by wolves, but ferocious birds. Firdousi, the *great Homer* of the East, in his well-known Persian epic, the *Shah-nameh*, says of the father of Rustom, the *great national hero* of Iran, the Hercules of Persia, that he was brought up by a ferocious bird, called Sîmorg, which, according to the *great Persian* historian, Sir John Malcolm, is the same as the bird Rokh, and which according to some authors is the same as the Griffin, and according to others the same as the Phœnix. It was called Sîmorg (*i. e.* 30 birds), because it was thought to be as strong singly as 30 other large birds combined. According to Firdousi, in the time of king Minôcheher, the wife of Sâm, the Persian General, gave birth to a son, whose body was all covered with gray hairs like that of an old man. Just as William II. was surnamed Rufus, from the redness of his hair, just as Pyrrhus was so called from the yellowness of his curls, and just as the family of Julius Cæsar derived its surname of Cæsar from the fact of its founder having a thick curl of hair (*Lat.* caes-ar-ies, *Sans.* केश, kesa), so this child of Sâm was called Zal-i-zar, *i. e.*, golden-haired old man. The great Persian General Sâm disliked this ugly-looking child, and thought that it brought shame and disgrace upon the family, so he sent the child away to the Caucasus to be exposed on Mount Elburz. While there the bird Sîmorg came to prey upon it, but instead of devouring the child, he had compassion on it, and took it to its own abode and nourished it with drops of blood from other young animals that it killed. The child was nourished by the bird till it grew up to be a boy, and was taken away by the father, who was always labouring under the stings of conscience for his cruelty towards the child.

Firdousi thus describes the interview between the child and the ferocious bird:—

“Chû Sîmorg râ bachê shud gursnê,
 Beparvâz bar shud buland az banê
 Bebordash damân tâ be Elbourz kûh
 Ke bûdash dar ânâ kanâm-i-garûh
 Suyê bachegân bord tâ beshkarand
 Bedân nâle-i-zâr-i-û benegarand
 Bebakhshûd Yazdân-i-niki dehash
 Yaki bûdani dâsht andar bavesh
 Khodâvand meheri be simorg dâd
 Nekard û bekhurdan as ân bache yâd
 Negeh kard Sîmorg ba bachegan
 Bar ân khûrd khun az dû dideh chegân
 Shegift ân he bar-u fekandand meher
 Bemândand khireh badân khûbcheher
 Shekari ke nazuktarân bar guzid
 Ke bîshîr mehmân hami khun mazîd,”

i. e., “When the young ones of the Sîmorg got hungry, the bird went flying from its nest into the air. It carried it (*i.e.*, the child) rapidly to the Elbourz mountain, where there was the nest of its family. It carried it to its young ones, so that they may devour it, and see the excessive weeping of the child. God the bestower of goodness favoured the child because there was a long life in store for it. God gave tenderness of heart to the Sîmorg and therefore it did not think of devouring the child. Sîmorg and its young ones looked to the child which was shedding tears from both its eyes. It was marvellous that they showed kindness to the child, and were struck with astonishment at the good-featured child. It (Sîmorg) selected for the child delicate and young animals so that the host may taste their blood instead of milk.”

Again, the Greek writers also speak of a Persian prince Achæmines being nourished by an eagle. So was Zanymedes, a beautiful boy of Phrygia, nourished by an eagle.

Semiramis, the founder of the Assyrian empire of Ninevah, was

miraculously preserved and fed by doves. Her mother, Derceto, of Ascalon, in Syria, being ashamed of her frailty with a Syrian youth, exposed this infant child in an open place, where she was preserved and nourished by doves till she was discovered by some wandering shepherds, who took her to Simmas, the chief shepherd of the royal herds. It was from this Simmas that she derived her name of Semiramis. Her surpassing beauty first made her the wife of Onnes, one of the king's generals, and then that of the king himself.



LANE MEDICAL LIBRARY

This book should be returned on or before
the date last stamped below.

JAN 30 1961

RA

621

M69

1889

LANE

HIST

